



City of Seattle  
Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor

## NEWS RELEASE

**For Immediate Release**

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### **Mayor Nickels awards grants to 12 businesses, celebrates façade improvement program in the U-District**

SEATTLE – Together with University District community leaders and business owners, Mayor Greg Nickels presented grant checks to 12 businesses and property owners representing almost \$80,000 of City investment in the U-District for enhancing storefronts along the Ave.

“Small businesses are the backbone of our neighborhoods,” said Mayor Nickels. “Façade program funds will help them grow and continue to be a vital part of this city.”

The Office of Economic Development (OED)’s façade improvement program is designed to stimulate investment in lower income neighborhoods, attract positive attention to businesses and spur other businesses to undertake needed improvements. Today’s grant recipients have contributed almost \$200,000 of their own funds towards improving their storefronts.

“The City’s façade improvement funds enabled us to go further than we would have with improvements,” said Scott Soules of Soules Properties, Inc. “The new remodeled architectural details, paint, awnings and signage have received many favorable comments and are benefiting the eight businesses in our building.”

The Office of Economic Development currently supports seven community-based organizations to provide grants for commercial building façade improvements in the following neighborhoods: Broadway (Capitol Hill), Central Area, International District, Pioneer Square, Southeast Seattle, South Park, University District and White Center.

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Funds may be used for exterior façade improvements, awnings, painting, signage and other improvements which will significantly enhance the appearance of the exterior of properties. Matching grant funds are awarded on a 1:1 matching basis; public funds can be lower or equal but not greater than the private investment.

Interested U-District businesses may apply for façade improvement funds through the Greater University Chamber of Commerce, the community-based organization that administers the façade program in the U-District at 206-547-4417 or [www.udistrictchamber.org](http://www.udistrictchamber.org).

“We certainly hope more businesses will take advantage of these funds to improve the look of their businesses,” said Teresa Lord Hugel, Executive Director, Greater University Chamber of Commerce. “Physical improvements to a storefront can do a lot to increase foot traffic and sales.”

For a full list of façade improvement program neighborhoods and contact information for the administering agencies, visit the Mayor’s website at: <http://www.seattle.gov/mayor/>

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